

15 of the Most Forgotten Driving Safety Topics For Every Motorist To Rediscover

Remember when you first got your license? There was a sense of freedom and possibility. There was excitement and fear the first time you pulled onto the highway. You knew the driver's ed manual from front to back-you even knew some of the driving safety topics that you didn't understand, like where to put your hands on the steering wheel.

Like anything else, though, as we gain experience, we also learn shortcuts, both good and bad. We get more comfortable and skilled at those things we once thought terrifying. We also tend to forget some important rules and procedures. That's why it is smart to revisit some of those driving safety topics now and then. Here are some you may have forgotten.

1. Parking on a Hill

Pop quiz: Which way do you turn your wheels when you park on a hill?

It's a trick question. When you park facing uphill, turn your wheels toward the street and use the curb as a block to keep your car from rolling. If you're facing downhill, turn your wheels toward the curb. Also, be sure to set your parking brake and put the car in first gear if you have a manual transmission.

2. Adjusting Mirrors and Headrest

Especially if you share a car with another driver, check your mirrors before getting on the road. Adjust the headrest, too. The headrest is designed to prevent whiplash in the case of a rear-end collision. Position your headrest so it is even with the top of your head and, ideally, about one inch away from the back of your head.

3. Wear Your Seatbelt

By now this should be a habit; however, there are still too many people who ignore the life-saving feature of car seatbelts. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that wearing a seatbelt in the front seat of a car can reduce fatal injury by 45 percent.

4. Driving in Fog

Driving in thick fog is a stressful experience. The National Weather Service offers these tips for driving safely in fog: slow down, turn on your lights, use your low beams, follow the lines of the road to ensure you stay in your lane, and do not multi-task.

5. Using High Beams

Fog isn't the only driving condition where high beams are detrimental. Whether you're on a city street, back road, or on the interstate, switch to low beams when you see another car. High beams make it difficult for oncoming traffic to see, and for cars in front of you, that bright light is distracting. It is also preferable to use your high beams when driving along a dark road in rural areas.

6. Stop for School Buses

It's hard to miss a stopped school bus; the sizeable yellow transport with flashing red lights and a bright stop sign is one of the most visible vehicles on the road. Yet a study by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services estimates that there are over 13 million violations by private motorists every school year. The point? Don't risk the lives and safety of children. Stop for school buses.

7. Driving in Rain

Driving in heavy rain is similar to driving in fog. Turn on your headlights (low beams), slow down, and be aware of the possibility of hydroplaning.

8. What to Do When You Hydroplane

Anytime you drive in the rain, or on wet roads, there is a chance you might hydroplane. To prevent this, slow down, take care of your tires, skip cruise control, avoid puddles, and drive thoughtfully.

9. Driving in Snow

From black ice to slippery roads, there are plenty of driving safety topics to explore for winter driving. At its most basic, however, the best way to drive in snow is to leave plenty of space between you and the car in front of you, plan extra time into your commute, and expect slippery roads.

10. Four-Way Stops

Who has the right of way at a four-way stop? The first car at the intersection has the right of way. The hard part is when two or more cars approach a four-way stop at the same time. What then? The car to the right goes first.

11. Share the Road with Bikes

According to Edmunds.com, cyclists have the same rights to the road that motorized vehicles have, and some states have a "3-foot rule" for passing bicyclists. Share the road, pass when it's safe to do so, and remember that's one less car creating traffic jams, during your morning drive.

12. Avoid Distractions

Distracted driving accounts for 10% of all fatal accidents and is responsible for more than 1,000 motor vehicle accidents per day, according to the NHTSA.

Texting and phone calls, especially for teen drivers, is a primary culprit, but other distractions include eating, talking to passengers, and adjusting the GPS.

13. Don't Tailgate

Driving too close to the car in front of you only accomplishes one thing: putting you, your passengers, and other drivers in danger. When you tailgate, you severely reduce your ability to stop in the event of an emergency. You also reduce your ability to look ahead for road hazards. It is recommended to leave at least three seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you.

14. Give Tractor-Trailers Plenty of Space

A tractor-trailer could weigh 20 times what your car does, and it takes the length of two football fields for it to stop. Don't pull out in front of a tractor-trailer, and when you are behind them, remember that they can't see you unless you can see their mirrors.

15. Driving Tired

Did you know that driving without enough sleep is just as bad as drunk driving? U.S. News reports that drivers who sleep for less than 4 hours in a 24-hour period are 11.5 times likelier to crash. If you find yourself getting sleepy behind the wheel, try to pull into a rest stop and take a nap. Light exercise is also good for rejuvenation, as is drinking caffeine or rolling down the window to get some fresh air. Be aware, however, that these are just temporary fixes.

Anytime is a good time to revisit driving safety topics. Not only can they help keep you safe, they can help improve your confidence behind the wheel.